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SEVEN DEFENDANTS CONVICTED FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CHILD EXPLOITATION ENTERPRISE

WASHINGTON AND PENSACOLA, Fla. – Seven U.S. defendants charged for their activity in a global child pornography trafficking enterprise were convicted today in the Northern District of Florida following a six-day jury trial before Senior U.S. District Judge Lacey A. Collier, Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida Thomas F. Kirwin and FBI Executive Assistant Director J. Stephen Tidwell announced.

The federal jury convicted the defendants of multiple charges, including: engaging in a child exploitation enterprise; conspiracy to advertise, transport, ship, receive and possess child pornography; advertising child pornography, transporting child pornography, receiving child pornography and obstruction of justice.

“This was a wide-scale, high volume, international trafficking enterprise that used sophisticated computer encryption technology and file-sharing techniques,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division. “Those who operate such enterprises can expect law enforcement, not only here but abroad, to react swiftly and aggressively, as we have done here.”

The defendants convicted at trial were: James Freeman of Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.; Gary Lakey of Anderson, Ind.; Marvin Lambert of Indianapolis; Neville McGarity of Medina, Texas; Warren Mumpower of Spokane, Wash.; Daniel Castleman of Lubbock, Texas; and Ronald White of Burlington, N.C.

Seven additional U.S. defendants, also indicted in the case, previously pleaded guilty to offenses related to the child pornography enterprise. Members of the highly-sophisticated international network were charged in a 40-count superseding indictment on March 19, 2008.

Evidence presented at trial, including approximately 50 witnesses and 500 exhibits, established that the defendants participated in a well-organized criminal enterprise whose purpose was to proliferate child sex abuse images to its membership during a two-year period. According to trial testimony, members of the illegal organization used Internet newsgroups - large file-sharing networks where text, software, pictures and videos can be traded and shared - to traffic in illegal images and videos depicting prepubescent children, including toddlers,

engaged in various sexual and sadistic acts. Specifically, an Australian constable who infiltrated the group in August 2006 testified about how group members employed a complex system of pseudonyms, screening tests for new members and sophisticated encryption methods to avoid detection. He also testified that the group traded more than 400,000 images and videos of child sexual abuse before it was dismantled by law enforcement.

Each defendant convicted at trial faces a minimum prison sentence of 20 years and a maximum of life in prison, in addition to statutory fines and the possibility of a lifetime period of supervised release following completion of any prison sentence. Sentencing is set April 14, 2009, for all defendants convicted today.

On the return of the guilty verdicts, Acting U.S. Attorney Kirwin said, "This jury verdict signals, once again, the community's reprehension for the culture of abuse and torture that is child pornography. I am as proud as I can be of our investigative and trial team for the hard work and countless hours they devoted to the investigation and successful prosecution of this scourge. This was truly a team effort by U.S. and foreign law enforcers and by prosecutors from our office and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. I want to specifically commend the dedication and superlative efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorney David L. Goldberg, CEOS Trial Attorney LisaMarie Freitas, Appellate Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert G. Davies, and Queensland, Australia Constable Brenden Power, and the agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Goldberg of the Northern District of Florida and Trial Attorney LisaMarie Freitas of CEOS. The case is being investigated by the Innocent Images Unit of the FBI and the Queensland, Australia, Police Service, with the assistance of the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) Child Pornography Unit in Germany and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre in the United Kingdom.

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